20: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1937 RD1 Ukraine RD1



people seize stones and with them beat their foreheads three times, saying: "Stone-head, stone-head, stone-head." This is supposed to make the head as hard as stone, i.e. immune to any ache.[75]

The evil spirits residing in natural phenomena can be a source of danger unless one takes the necessary precautions. When it thunders and lightens, one should avoid walking along the road, and should sit down somewhere at the side, because God is shooting at the fleeing Devil and his arrows may accidentally kill the wayfarer.[76] One should do the same in the case of a dust storm, for its indwelling Devil is likely to harm a Christian.[77] One can lessen the severity of a blizzard (*metylycia*), and cause it to subside, by throwing sharp edged sticks at the driving snow. Falling hail can also be rendered harmless by catching the first hailstones, chewing them, and spitting them on the ground; "the horns of the evil spirit are then chewed off," and the hail loses its harmfulness in that locality.[78]

## Part III

### *Healing by Magic*

Disease, like other calamities, is attributed by the people to evil spirits. It is the incessant activities of a multitude of supernatural beings, the people believe, that cause the many afflictions that befall the human body and soul.[79] Epidemic and fatal diseases are personified as supernatural women. The female personification of the plague, according to a popular story, once made a young peasant carry her on his shoulders. Wherever he went people began to die by the thousands. Finally he attempted to get rid of his dread burden by throwing himself into a river. It was he alone, however, who drowned; the plague, being light

[75] Kolessa, F. "Ludovy wiruwania na pidhirju," *Etnograficznyj Zbirnyk* (Lviw, 1898), v, 77.

[76] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 91. [77] Kolessa, F. *op cit.*, v, 76.

[78] Kolberg, *Przemyskie*, p. 234.

[79] Kolberg, O. *Pokucie, Obraz Etnograficzny* (Kraków, 1882-89, 4 vols.), 160.

753 as a feather, escaped. She was so frightened, nevertheless, that she fled to the forest and forsook her activities, so that the epidemic ceased.[80]

755 782 One way of avoiding death or serious harm is to propitiate the spirits through vows.

It happens often that a sick person makes a vow (*zarikajet sie*), i.e. a promise, that if he regains his health, he will forego certain pleasures in life, or abstain from some pleasant task. A certain woman, for example, accidentally drove a needle into the palm of her hands, and when the physician, after chloroforming her, removed the needle, the convalescent pledged herself never again to sew embroidered shoulder-pieces on to a shirt of hers. This promise she kept religiously, sewing only on shirts belonging to others. Another woman, in order to rid herself of a headache, promised that she would not spin on Fridays; when relieved, she occupied herself every Friday with a different task in order to avoid spinning. A peasant in order to preserve his cattle during an epidemic that had broken out, solemnly vowed to give up drinking liquor for half a year, and when his cattle were saved he kept his word.[81]

755 Believing in the supernatural causation of disease, the people have little faith in scientific medical treatment, if they do not ignore it altogether. Poverty, though doubtless a factor, is far less important than the conviction, fully compatible with the prevailing conception of disease, that the native medicine-men and their remedies are more reliable than physicians and their medications. That the question of money is not decisive can be seen from the fact that quack doctors often receive larger fees than trained physicians. Even when given free treatment and medicine, an individual often puts aside the medicament and then boasts that he has gotten well because he has not used it.[82] While he places full confidence in his own remedies,

[113]

[80] Woycicki, K. W. *Polnische Volkssagen und Maerchen* (Berlin, 1839), pp. 23-4.

[81] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 160.

[82] Kaindl, R. F. *Die Huzulen* (Wien, 1894), p. 93.

20: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1937 RD1 Ukraine RD1



753 *wroku* ! " (no evil eye !). Failure to take this precaution may result in harm, even though there is not the slightest intention of so doing.[107]

An individual affected by the " evil eye " first loses suddenly his good humour and complacency, and then becomes sick. The result may even be fatal, particularly if he falls asleep before ridding himself of the evil wrought upon him.[108] All successful, good looking, or otherwise fortunately endowed persons or animals are susceptible to the evil eye. Children, in particular, fall
755 an easy prey, for they have no power to resist. To render her child immune from the effects of a harmful glance which may possibly have been cast upon it during the day, a mother never fails to exorcise the evil before putting her child to sleep. This she does by sucking it out of the forehead of the child and spitting it out into the four corners of the room, signifying the four cardinal directions, so that the evil glance, from whatever direction it may have come, shall disappear whence it came. As she does so, she says : " *Chto ti wrik, naj ti wzme* ! " (Whoever sent you take you back !) A similar precaution is followed many times during the day, if the child feels indisposed.[109]

Adults are cured of the evil eye by a multitude of elaborate methods, including that of " extinguishing coals," already mentioned, and others too numerous to specify. The cure is usually undertaken by an otherwise ordinary person, even a member of the family, who is acquainted with a formula effective against the evil eye. Like the weather-man and healer, such an individual never reveals the secret of his art, for if he did, his charms would lose their effect and he himself might even suffer harm.[110]

751 Persons repeatedly subject to the effects of the evil eye are advised to carry constantly with them a piece of laudanum over which a soothsayer has uttered a special conjuration. Other protective devices, also useful for warding off other evil influences, include the *klokiczka*, a piece of wood consecrated together with Easter bread and carried on a string around the neck, a little mercury inserted in a wooden cross, brass rings and crosses, strings of hair or gut, old coins, certain dried herbs, and other

[107] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 132. [108] *Idem*.

[109] *Idem*. [110] *Ibid*., p. 133.

20: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1937 RD1 Ukraine RD1



indigestion or an acute pain in the stomach, for example, the *znachor*

> takes a rope and continually mumbles something while making various knots in it. He then hangs the rope, like a bag, around the shoulders of the patient. The formula itself is a secret; we have been told, however, that it is supposed to consist of the enumeration or rehearsing of all the tasks performed in connection with flax from the moment when its seeds are threshed out to the moment when the fabric is completed.[105]

Before undertaking to treat paralysis with herbs, the *znachor* takes a knife, grasps it by the cutting edge, makes the sign of the cross three times over the patient, and utters the following incantation:

> In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, oh, painful pain, malicious and cunning enemy, leave, depart from the born and baptized servant of God. Betake yourself to the crossways, to the swamps, where God's creatures do not go, where squirrels do not peer in, where geese do not hiss, and cocks do not crow. There you shall fly around, there you shall sit, there you shall return, there you shall have something to do in this world.[106]

The people themselves, of course, also employ incantations, and nearly every household has at least one member who knows how to conjure away the common ailments.

Foremost among the ills susceptible to cure by means of incantations is the "evil eye" (*uroki*). So widespread and so generally feared is this form of bewitching that the people seem almost constantly to be taking one precaution or another against it. This vigilance becomes understandable when one realizes that any person may cause harm to another, often quite unwittingly, merely by looking at him or talking about him. Especially is this true of a person who has some uncanny quality about his eyes. Since one may possess and exert the evil eye all unknowingly, it is common, in observing or mentioning a person admiringly, to guard against injuring him by adding the phrase: "*n.*

[105] Kolberg, *Pokucie*, iii, 168. [106] Kolberg, *Przemyskie*, pp. 339-40.

20: Koenig E-4 (no date) 1937 RD1 Ukraine RD1



The horn(e.p) is employed especially in healing hæmorrhoids.

(*zolotnyk*). According to popular belief, every person, male or female, has a *zolotnyk* which dwells under his navel. If he lifts a heavy burden, the *zolotnyk* descends and causes hæmorrhoids. The sufferer, after he has been cupped and the painful spot has been smeared with butter, is put in a very warm spot in the room, often in the oven itself, so that he may be properly "steamed up." To effect a permanent cure, however, the *zolotnyk* must be driven back to its "natural" seat. This is usually done by a professional healer, who, with the appropriate incantations, massages the patient's stomach with butter, using only an upward motion.[133]

Syphilis is not regarded with a gravity commensurate with its seriousness, but rather as just another of the numerous maladies with which people become afflicted. Every symptom of this venereal infection is looked upon as a distinct disease having its own cause. When its effects become visible on the nose, it is considered to be a wound caused by water, and its appearance on the palate is diagnosed as due to dust. All the symptoms are treated by smoking very strong tobacco, or by applying concoctions and salves compounded of various herbs.[134] As to the origin of this disease, the people tell the following fantastic story:

> A certain emperor was in love with his daughter-in-law. St. John, of course, reproved him, and made him dance with her at the ball. As a punishment, the emperor put St. John into a dungeon. In the morning the daughter-in-law and the executioner entered the dungeon and cut off St. John's head. At that very moment all food and drink turned into blood. The daughter-in-law then put the head of St. John on a plate and, upon arriving in town, hurled it seventy-six times in the air. Whoever was sprinkled with the blood of St. John's head became afflicted with syphilis.[135]

Epilepsy is definitely ascribed to an evil spirit. When the *czort* (Devil) gets hold of a person, they say, he throws him on the ground and turns his eyes so that he does not see or hear anything.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 162-3. [134] Szuchiewicz, W. *op. cit.*, 57-8.

[135] *Ibid.*, i, p. 45.